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The Québec Minister of Culture and Communications at the Cultural Diversity Conference

Guadalajara, November 30, 2003—Québec Minister of Culture and Communications Line Beauchamp participated in the opening of the first Cultural Diversity Conference at the Guadalajara International Book Fair (IBF) with Ms Sari Bermúdez, president of the Mexico National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA), Catalonia's Mr. Oleguer Sarsanedas, spokesperson of the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures in Barcelona, and Mr. Didier Le Bret of the French foreign affairs department.

The Cultural Diversity Conference gave Catalonian, French, Mexican, Québec, and Latin American representatives the opportunity to discuss expectations, explain the challenges of protecting and promoting cultural diversity in light of globalization and the liberalization of trade, and set courses of action with respect to the pending convention on cultural diversity at UNESCO.

"I would like this conference to be the high point of Québec's presence in Guadalajara, a shining example not only for the visitors and intellectuals attending the IBF, but also an international milestone in the promotion of cultural diversity," said minister Beauchamp.

Each year the faculty of social and human sciences at the University of Guadalajara organizes 17 major international conferences at the IBF, attended by over 400 academics. Some sixty Québec researchers and experts will take part this year. Québec, the guest of honor, has played a key role in organizing the Cultural Diversity Conference

Cultural Diversity Conference Themes

The conference features three themes.

theme 1—why: *The importance of preserving and promoting cultural diversity*

theme 2—UNESCO's decision and its aftermath: *The content of the convention on protecting the diversity of cultural content and artistic expression*

theme 3—the next steps: *Roles and action plans of governments and civil society*

The conference features lectures by culture experts from around the world and panel discussions with experts and representatives of international bodies and governments.

"What would happen to the cultural wealth of peoples in a world that strictly subjected creativity, thought, music, arts, and literature to market forces?", asked Ms Beauchamp, adding "we raise this issue time and again at all international

forums we attend."

The minister reminded the attendees that cultural diversity is a Québec government priority and that Québec hopes international efforts to draft a UNESCO convention by 2005 will continue to garner support.

"I see this conference as key for defending the identity and uniqueness of cultures. The conference organizers have succeeded in bringing a critical mass of thinkers, intellectuals, experts, artists, and representatives of government and NGOs together in Guadalajara. I have no doubt that this meeting will greatly contribute to promote cultural diversity" affirmed Ms Beauchamp.

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